

---

## Faith Newsletter Article

---

### **Where was Mrs. Martin last Sunday morning? And come to think of it, she wasn't at Bible Study last Wednesday night!**

Mrs. Martin was at home taking care of her mother who has recently experienced some memory and physical impairments. Now Mrs. Martin must prepare her mother's meals, help her with housecleaning, finances, and personal care. Mrs. Martin works and caregiving has taken quite a bit of time away from other things in her life and has taken a toll on her energy as well.

### **Why the focus on caregiving?**

- ***November is Family Caregivers' Month.***
- One-fourth of all adult North Carolinians provide regular care to someone age 60 or older. See state caregiver statistics at <http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/aging/fcaregr/fcdemog.htm>
- The federal government has recognized and offered support to family caregivers through the National Family Caregiver Support Program. (<http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/aging/fcaregr/fchome.htm> to learn about NC's implementation; <http://www.aoa.gov/prof/aoaproq/caregiver/caregiver.asp> for information on the national perspective).

### **How can the faith community, *your* faith community, help support caregivers in your congregation and in the community at large?**

- Identify and recognize caregivers in your congregation.
- Offer support groups to bring caregivers together.
- Provide meals for the care-receiver, the caregiver or both.
- Organize respite volunteers to allow the caregiver to have a break or time to take care of their own needs by:
  - Offering in-home respite.
  - Offering a group respite site. See the Brookdale Foundation Website for information on funding at <http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/aging/fcaregr/newop.htm>
- Offer transportation (take care-receiver to the doctor, the bank, etc.).
- Make community resource information available (find local provider information at [http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/aging/info\\_sdr.htm](http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/aging/info_sdr.htm)).
- Provide a library section for caregivers. For a bibliography, see <http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/aging/fcaregr/faithbio.htm>
- Form coalitions with other faith communities to offer volunteer services to assist caregivers (respite, transportation, meals, home repair and adaptation). For information on grants for this type of service visit the Robert Wood Johnson Faith in Action Program website at <http://www.fiavolunteers.org/>
- Offer caregiver workshops or refer to community when workshops are available.
  - Workshop information is often available through your local aging office or area agency on aging.

- Topics could include
  - End of life issues
  - Community resources
  - Legal issues
  - Advance planning (planning for future incapacity)
  - Disease education
  - Caregiving hands-on skills
- Medicare (Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services) is interested in partnering with faith communities to provide important and useful Medicare and other health Information. See <http://cms.hhs.gov/partnerships/communities/default.asp>
- Ask caregivers what they need and want.
- Become involved in local efforts to support caregivers. Call the Area Agency on Aging Caregiver Resource Specialist for more information on this. <http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/aging/fcaregr/fcjobs.htm>
- Visit <http://www.nfcacares.org/clergy.html> for tips on **Supporting Caregiving Families: A Guide for Congregations and Parishes** and a worship service to honor caregivers—perfect for National Family Caregiver Month!
- Check into establishing volunteer Support Teams to assist families and individuals with needs. Contact Support Team Network, 188 Community Care Bldg., Birmingham, AL 35924-2050; 1-877-614-9129 or on the web at <http://www.SupportTeam.org>
- Visit <http://www.fullcirclecare.org> for educational and resource information.

To find out what caregiving activities are taking place with faith based organizations around